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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000562

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SUBJECT: FORMER IRAQI DPM DISCUSSES MODERATE FRONT

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: Former Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways and the Ambassador discussed on February 10 the status of the moderate front. The Ambassador encouraged Shaways to play an active role in its formation. Shaways said he favored transferring de-Ba'athification to the judiciary and punishing only those that had committed crimes. He said the Kirkuk referendum should come before KRG provincial elections, but the rest of the provinces could proceed with elections separately. He and the Ambassador also briefly discussed next steps on the hydrocarbons law. END SUMMARY.

Moderate Front

¶12. (S) The Ambassador and Shaways discussed KRG President and KDP leader Massoud Barzani's month-long stay in Baghdad late last year during the original push to form a moderate front. They discussed the front's current "virtual" status and composition - PUK, KDP, IIP, and SCIRI, plus the PM (not Da'wa). They discussed how to assure the KDP was involved in the drafting of a program for the moderate front, and the Ambassador encouraged Shaways to get involved. He told Shaways that Barzani had designated Shaways as his representative Baghdad.

¶13. (S) Shaways said he had been involved in previous iterations of the proposed front and had drafted several documents on it in conjunction with Vice-President Mehdi. He said Vice-President Hashemi did not want the front. The Ambassador told Shaways that Hashemi had changed his mind. Shaways said Hashemi still wants to gain authority, prisoner release, and money before joining. The Ambassador said these could be part of the program for the moderate front, which Shaways accepted.

¶14. (S) The Ambassador passed to Shaways a copy of Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih's draft memo on forming an Executive Council. Shaways said it is not enough to work with just the Presidency Council and the PM. He suggested expanding the moderate front to eight main players, including Talabani, Barzani, Hakim, Hashemi, Maliki, and Jafari with rotating leadership. He said the other alternative was something official but "quiet." Shaways said Talabani wanted to bring the PM under control of the Presidency.

De-Ba'athification Law

¶15. (S) The Ambassador pressed Shaways to help move along the de-Ba'athification law as part of the moderate front. Shaways said that de-Ba'athification should be transferred to the judiciary, and those who have committed crimes should be

punished. He said the categories of Ba'ath party membership that fall under the law should be reduced. Barzani had made these points at the London reconciliation conference, he said. The Ambassador told Shaways he would pass the Arabic language version of the Embassy's draft de-Ba'athification law to Shaways the next day for his review. They briefly discussed the other three drafts from the HNDBC (Chalabi draft), IIP, and Allawi/Iraqiya.

Hydrocarbons Law

¶6. (S) The Ambassador said he would send Shaways a draft of the agreements from the Salah ad-Din meetings with February 3-5. Shaways said KRG PM Nechirvan Barzani would need to come to Baghdad to finalize an agreement. In the meantime KRG oil minister Ashti should come to Baghdad to work out the details. He told the Ambassador that Nechirvan had said the law cannot go to the CoR until the entire package is decided.

Shaways: Kirkuk Referendum Before Provincial Elections

¶7. (S) Shaways conceded that the date for holding a referendum on Kirkuk and other disputed territories could slip until January 2008, as long as a specific date was set. He said they did not intend for this to happen but some Kurds were thinking about it and preparing for such a contingency. He said the Ambassador should speak to Barzani about it. The Ambassador suggested they both engage Barzani on this issue and then meet again to discuss it. (Note: In a separate meeting February 10 Shaways told PolCouns that they must conduct a census before a referendum or people would say the

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referendum had been manipulated. He also said Nechirvan Barzani was adamant about meeting the December 31 deadline to hold the referendum. End Note).

¶8. (C) Shaways said that elections could be held in the other provinces prior to the Kirkuk referendum with the understanding that the make-up of provincial councils may change after Kirkuk holds elections. In fact, he said other provinces could hold elections immediately.

KHALILZAD